

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 INR-11 EB-11 COME-00 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6643

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CZ

SUBJ: 1974 CZECHOSLOVAK GRAIN HARVEST

REF: PRAGUE 1624

1. AS PRAGUE CONTINUES TO SUFFER FROM COLDEST AND WETTEST SUMMER IN MEMORY, HARVEST PROSPECTS REMAIN UNCERTAIN. HARVEST APPEARS BE RUNNING AT LEAST 10-14 DAYS BEHIND SCHEDULE; AS OF JULY 23, HARVESTED AREA IN SLOVAKIA TOTALED ONLY 130,000 HECTARES (OF 808,500 HA UNDER GRAIN), AND IN CZECH LANDS, HARVEST IS BARELY UNDERWAY IN SOUTHERN MORAVIA. PRESS REFERENCES TO "STRUGGLE WITH WEATHER" INDICATE THAT LODGING WILL PRESENT SERIOUS PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE AT EGYPTIAN NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION ON JULY 23, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER HRUZA OPTIMISTICALLY PREDICTED
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THAT 1974 WOULD PROVIDE RECORD YIELDS DESPITE ADVERSE WEATHER;

HURZA WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT AGRICULTURE MINISTRY WAS HOPING FOR YIELD OF 40 QUINTALS PER HECTARE, AS COMPARED WITH 1973 OVERALL GRAIN YIELD OF 35 Q/HA (1973 WHEAT YIELD WAS 37 Q/HA). BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN IF INDIVIDUAL FARMS OR DISTRICTS MANAGE TO BRING IN HIGH YELDS, HURZA MAY HAVE BEEN WHISTLING IN THE DARK; ON JULY 11, CZECH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE NAGR ESTIMATED THAT 1974 YIELD IN CZECH LANDS WOULD AVERAGE 34.7 Q/HA (37 Q/HA WHEAT, 29.2 Q/HA RYE, 34.9 Q/HA BARLEY, 28.9 Q/HA OATS, AND 18.6 Q/HA RAPE) FOR TOTAL HARVEST OF 6,160,000 MT GRAIN IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA.

3. AS PRESS BEGINS TO REPORT MEETING AND EXCEEDING OF STATE PURCHASE QUOTAS IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS, WISH CAUTION ANALYSTS THAT THESE PURCHASES ACCOUNT FOR ONLY ONE-QUARTER TO ONE-THIRD OF OVERALL GRAIN HARVESTS. IN 1974, FOR EXAMPLE, STATE PURCHASES WILL REPRESENT ONLY 26 PER CENT OF WHEAT HARVEST, WITH REMAINDER ALLOCATED TO FEED, SEED, AND LOCAL USE PURPOSES. PERRY

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